

OPPOSITION TO SOVIET SCHEMES

The Public Relations Bureau was valiantly seconded by the British Council. The latter, whose central headquarters are in London, is an institution dedicated to the spread of British culture among foreign nations. It had a permanent representative in Teheran, first in the person of J. S. Bingley and later in that of C. H. Owen. The council worked through the network of the Anglo-Persian Institutes :ha: had been established in the capital and in some larger towns of Iran, especially in central and southern provinces. Concerts, exhibitions of British art, lectures by prominent British scholars, and excellent classical plays presented by the Anglo-Iranian Dramatic Socie:\ were frequently organized under the council's auspices. At the same time the Anglo-Persian Institutes conducted regular language courses attended by impressive numbers of the younger generation.

British propaganda carefully avoided any direct anti-Sovie: references. But the very intensity of this propaganda and the lar^e array of means to disperse it would make no sense whatsoever unless it was employed as a counterweight to the Communist offensive. It aimed at registering in Iranian minds that Great Britain was a powerful factor to be reckoned with and that she had no intention of liquidating her imperial responsibilities in the Middle East. And, despite the modesty prevailing at social gatherings in the British Embassy itself, the Public Relations Bureau was indefatigable in neutralizing any Soviet propaganda move by its ov;n counternmove. Repeated receptions, press conferences, film showings, and the like were held by the P.R.B. At times this Soviet-British competition would appear as a mad scramble for the privilege of preaching *to* and

feeding an ever
greater number of Iranians.

Unlike the Russians, the British worked under severe handicaps. Their propaganda efforts were hampered by the fact that London conducted a policy of friendship to Russia almost at any cost. This meant a readiness to accommodate Russia in many political matters and to ignore patiently many pinpricks from Moscow. In Iran it prevented the British from replying with adequate candor and firmness to Soviet anti-British moves. British propaganda, in contrast to Soviet, appeared to be on the defensive. As such it had to play second fiddle to Russian propaganda because an offensive, especially in psychological warfare, always secures better results. The British thus